



State of Texas
Senate Health & Human Services
Committee

Review of Refugee
Resettlement Program

April 21, 2016



Who We Are

*Guided by the principles of human compassion and dignity, **Refugee Services of Texas (RST)** was founded in 1978 and welcomes refugees, immigrants and other displaced people and supports them in integrating and thriving in their new communities.*

RST is affiliated with Church World Service (CWS), Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service (LIRS), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM) and is a close and long-standing partner with the State of Texas HHSC, as well as the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants to serve survivors of human trafficking.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE



Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Service





**REFUGEE SERVICES
OF TEXAS** *Open Hearts.
Fresh Starts.*



Resettled in Dallas, TX, February 2013

RST Clients



Resettled in Austin, TX, May 2009

Who are refugees?

A refugee has been forced to leave his or her country because of a **well-founded fear of persecution**, based on the person's **race, religion, nationality, or participation in a particular social or political group.**



There are three possible durable solutions for refugees:

1. Repatriation to home country
2. Local Integration in region
3. Resettlement to third country*

**Resettlement is only considered when the first two options are not possible.*

Refugee Facts

- Approximately 60 million people currently displaced from their homes by violence (*1 out of every 122 people worldwide*)
- 19.5 million classified as refugees
- 38.2 million internally displaced people
- Less than 1% are resettled to third countries (*120,000 / year approximately*)
- Average wait in a refugee camp is 7 years



U.S. Refugee Admissions Program

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 2, 2013

October 2, 2013

Presidential Determination
No. 2014-01

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2014

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the "Act") (8 U.S.C. 1157), as amended, and after appropriate consultations with the Congress, I hereby make the following determinations and authorize the following actions:

The admission of up to 70,000 refugees to the United States during fiscal year (FY) 2014 is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest; provided that this number shall be understood as including persons admitted to the United States during FY 2014 with Federal refugee resettlement assistance under the Amerasian immigrant admissions program, as provided below.

Each year the U.S. President sets a target number of refugees to be admitted to the U.S. In FY2015, that number was **70,000.**

Refugee Arrivals

Fiscal Year 2015

- U.S.: 69,933 Total Refugee Arrivals
- Texas:

	<u>County Total</u>	<u>RST Total</u>
➤ Bexar	648	0
➤ Dallas	1,652	523
➤ Harris	2,083	185
➤ Potter	401	284
➤ Tarrant	1,168	381
➤ Taylor	427	0
➤ Travis	687	499
➤ Other counties	413	0
➤ Total	7,479*	1,872

**This figure is ranked #16 among U.S. states proportionate to population.*

RST Funding

Fiscal Year 2015

- Total RST Funding = \$12,850,000*

By Source:	<u>Total</u>	<u>Direct to Client</u>
➤ Dept. of State <i>(via nat'l partner)</i>	\$3,700,000	\$2,200,000
➤ Dept. of HHS <i>(via nat'l partner)</i>	\$1,700,000	\$600,000
➤ Dept. of HHS <i>(via TX-HHSC)</i>	\$6,500,000	\$4,000,000
➤ Dept. of Justice <i>(Survivors of Trafficking)</i>	\$300,000	\$140,000
➤ Private donations <i>(Cash and In-Kind)</i>	\$650,000	\$600,000
➤ Total	\$12,850,000	\$7,540,000

*All of RST's funding sources originate from federal agencies or private supporters.



Refugee Status Post-Arrival to U.S.

- Refugees are legally authorized to work in the U.S. immediately upon arrival and begin paying taxes right away as part of their employment and annual obligations.
- After 12 months refugees must apply to become Permanent Resident Aliens (Green Card).
- After 4 years and 9 months refugees apply for U.S. citizenship.

- Initial Resettlement Services (30-90 days)
 - Airport reception
 - Culturally-appropriate food
 - Safe and appropriate housing
 - Health assessment
 - Immunizations
 - Cultural orientation
 - Social security card
 - Refugee cash assistance
 - Refugee Medical Assistance enrollment
 - SNAP enrollment
 - Employment services enrollment
 - English language class enrollment
 - School enrollment
 - Any other enrollment or specialized assistance as needed on a case-by-case basis



RST Services

- Ongoing Services – After initial resettlement period
 - Employment services
 - English language classes
 - Extended case management
 - Medical case management
 - Mental health counseling
 - Youth programs
 - Immigration services
 - Services for survivors of human trafficking
 - Community gardening
 - Community outreach, liaising and engagement
 - Volunteer coordination



Early Employment

• *The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program is founded on a model of early employment. Refugees arriving to the U.S. must go to work and become self-sufficient within a few months.*



Refugee Agencies assist by providing:

- Language skills
- Job readiness classes
- Application assistance
- Employer relations
- Community networking
- Recertification support

❖ *Refugee Services of Texas consistently maintains an employment placement rate between 82% and 100% for all of its refugee clients.*

Partnership & Community

• The refugee program in Texas is founded on a public-private partnership. All refugee agencies must partner, consult and work closely with local communities to discuss the program and provide support to newly arrived refugees through:

- Church co-sponsors
- Volunteers
- Mentors
- Donations
- Community support
- Referral networks



Community Consultation

- All refugee agencies consistently track success rates of their clients including economic self-sufficiency, and monitor community infrastructure and service capacity.
- All refugee agencies consult with local stakeholders in each of their respective communities at a minimum quarterly about the refugee program, which includes other service providers, public agencies, elected officials, the State Refugee Coordinator and State Refugee Health Coordinator.
- All refugee agencies share this information with their national partners who are also monitoring their capacity with the U.S. Department of State and resettlement support centers overseas.

RST Staff

- *RST employs a diverse, talented and passionate team to do the hard work every day of helping families start new lives in Texas.*

